

SERMON STUDY SUMMARY

Romans Part 12: A New Family in Christ

INTRODUCTION

Do you believe God is able to change human nature? Is it possible for immoral people to be given self-control, cruel people to be made kind, selfish people to become generous? The second half of Romans 5 not only summarizes the first four chapters but it also lays a foundation for the New Testament's answer to these questions.

Jesus didn't just come to save us from our sins, He came to adopt us into his family and to begin to live His life through us. Romans 5:12-21 describes and compares two family heritages: The family of Adam and the family of Christ. Both Adam and Jesus at one point in time stepped into the spotlight of history and made a key decision that had sweeping consequences for humanity. In Genesis 3:6 we read that Adam and his wife Eve ate the fruit God told them not to. As a result, sin entered the world. We aren't just people who sin once in a while, but pride, selfishness, and self-centeredness are part of our very nature (Romans 5:12). A second implication of Adam's disobedience is that death, both physical and spiritual, entered the world as well. When Adam and Eve sinned, something died inside of them and this was passed on to all their descendants, the entire human race.

Contrast Adam with Jesus Christ, who also stepped onto the world stage in a garden, this time the garden of Gethsemane. We find Him kneeling, praying, with all the spotlights of history on him. Would He or would He not follow the call of God the Father to become the sin sacrifice for the world? Jesus said, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). Jesus went to the cross, an historic decision of obedience to God making it possible for everything to be made right again.

To be in Adam's family, all we have to do is be born. To gain entrance into Christ's family we must be 'born again'. Adam's sin resulted in us being corrupted by sin, becoming objects of God's wrath and judgment, and facing eternal separation from God. Christ's sacrifice made a way for us to be justified through our faith in Him (Romans 5:16). When we in faith embrace Christ as our Lord and Savior we are taken out of Adam's family and born into Christ's family. We can now experience a full life here on earth and eternal life with the Lord in heaven.

Along with adoption into Christ's family we experience a fundamental change at the level of our nature. His life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control is being lived through us. Erwin Lutzer gives the illustration of living in an apartment complex where the old landlord (Satan) has been bought out by new management (Jesus Christ) who pays all our debts. In Christ, you have a new authority, a new heritage, and you don't have to listen or give in to your old landlord anymore.

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. If you could instantly improve one area of your life, what would it be? (Ex. exercise, deeper friendships, travel more, etc.)
2. Tell of an experience where you were expecting, perhaps deserving, 'law', but were granted 'grace' instead. How did it make you feel?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Romans 5:12-17

3. What is the 'bad news' of this passage? What legacy does Adam leave to humanity? What role do we play?

Read Romans 5:18-21

4. What is the 'good news' of belonging to the 'family of Christ'? While the consequences of our actions continue to deeply affect our lives, how do the gifts of God's grace give us certainty that joy is also always within reach?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. Those in Adam's family are ruled by guilt and fear, to name just two things. Those in Christ's family are ruled by love and grace. Which family do you typically live under? What is a trait from Adam's family that you are now able to cast off?
6. Pastor Henry said, "Not only did Christ graciously wash away our sins but He made us spiritually alive." How do you respond when you consider that your sins are washed away? What does it look like in your life to be 'spiritually alive'?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

When you are in Christ, everything is new. The old allegiances and debts have been broken. You have a new authority. Ask the Lord to help you to grow in these truths, reflect them by how you live, and share them with others. Memorize and meditate on 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here."

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 5:12-21

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—

13 To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

18 Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

20 The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.